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Western Civilization in its Economic Aspects (Mediaeval and Modern Times). By W. CUNNINGHAM, D.D. (Cambridge University Press. 1900. Pp. xii, 300.)

PROFESSOR CUNNINGHAM has a way of breaking new ground. He is essentially a pioneer. His *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* introduced for the first time the ideas of continuity of development and correlation of parts into the broad domain of English economic history. The work which this volume completes and of which it is decidedly the most important half is similarly a book on new lines. It is not an economic history, nor is it an economic interpretation of history. It is rather a study of the influence of the other great forces of history on economic conditions. It is an examination of economic history in the light of all the other influences which combined to make each period what it was: an effort to appraise the contribution of each nation and period to civilization, especially to civilization in its economic aspect. It is, therefore, a book of generalizations, of broad views, of suggestions, of insight, of grouping of facts, rather than of investigation and detailed statements.

Dr. Cunningham distinguishes three periods since the fall of the Roman Empire. The first is Christendom as reconstructed after the confusions of the barbaric invasions; united by its common religious belief and ecclesiastical subordination to Rome, depending on traditions and survivals of the Empire for its industrial arts, but distinguished from it by its higher conception of the dignity of man and its fuller recognition of human responsibility in the use of wealth. This period reached its culmination in the centuries from the twelfth to the fifteenth. The great discoveries of the fifteenth century brought in another age marked by the realization of vaster possibilities of wealth to be gained by trading with the Orient and America, and more complete utilization of the internal resources of the separate nations that were being organized, of the possible solution by thought and effort of the problems of national greatness. This period involved a gradual "secularization" of daily life as opposed to the ecclesiastical administration of the Middle Ages, a disruption of the unity of Christendom due to the Reformation and to the stronger national tendencies, and an elevation of capital into the position of the most influential of all economic factors. This second period endured till in the eighteenth century a sudden introduction of improvements in the industrial arts initiated another age of rapid economic changes. The most striking characteristic of this period is its apparently irresistible tendency to overspread and modify the portions of the world not heretofore affected by Western civilization and perhaps even to assimilate them to its own characteristics.

The details on which the description of the first of these periods is based are largely worked out by Dr. Cunningham himself. For the later and more extensive periods he is naturally more dependent on other investigators. The bibliographical references to these numerous varied

and critically chosen monographs are not the least valuable and interesting part of the work. Two chapters of especial interest are on "Christian Relations with Heathen and Moslems" in the Middle Ages and "Rival Commercial Empires" in more modern times.

But this constant generalization and comparison costs its price in the shape of occasional strained analogies and artificial interpretations. If we declared the author's estimate of the influence of religion upon trade in the Middle Ages an exaggerated one, it might be considered simply a difference of opinion, could we not convict him out of his own mouth. He says that "Christianity reconstituted the economic life of the old world," that "Christendom was one organized society for all the purposes of economic life." "Christendom was extraordinarily homogeneous." Yet, when he comes to describe trade between Christian merchants and the Mohammedan inhabitants of Morocco, he says, "It is curious to observe that there is little difference between the provisions laid down and those which were necessary for the prosecution of industry made within Christendom." In other words, it was Christianity which gave medieval trade its peculiar shape, but it had just the same shape under Mohammedanism. A safe inference would seem to be that the major premise is incorrect and that trade and religion had very little to do with one another. Similarly the contrasts of policy of the successive colonizing nations, Portugal, Holland, Spain, France, England, seem a little too symmetrical for real life, and lead one to wonder what single guiding spirit is left to characterize the latest of all colonizing nations and the one in which we have the most interest. But we cannot have broad results without some bold generalizations, and immersed as most students are for the greater part of their time in the study of details, they may well accept thankfully and without cavil the thoughtful, suggestive and original book which Dr. Cunningham has given them.

E. P. CHEYNEY.

A Study of the Court of Star Chamber, largely based on Manuscripts in the British Museum and the Public Record Office. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago.] By CORA L. SCOTFIELD. (Chicago: The University Press. 1900. Pp. xxx, 82.)

THIS monograph is a helpful contribution to the history of English institutions and it is decidedly an encouraging product of American university training. Few subjects are more interesting or more complex than the evolution of the various courts and councils from their germ in the original *magnum concilium* or great *curia regis* of the early Norman times. Among the many hard questions connected with this development, perhaps the hardest is the problem of the origin and primitive character of the so-called Star Chamber court. The author has appealed to the existing sources; and if these have not enabled her in some vital points to reach positive demonstration, she has at any rate led us very close to the truth. Aside from the printed books, comprising state